

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and system is disclosed for displaying a program, commercial or a promotional message to a viewer of a viewing appliance. A method has steps of transmitting a television signal such that a display screen displays live or pre-recorded audio/visual programming; and opening a visually distinct on-screen area, region, window or stripe on the display screen upon command of the viewer, the on-screen area displaying information that provides the viewer with a capability to interactively obtain selected information from an information provider through a data communications network, such as the Internet, or to participate in an interactive application, such as a poll. The method implements steps of sending a first trigger signal (a VBI trigger) from a server for prompting the viewer to select whether the viewer wishes to have the on-screen area displayed during a program and, if the viewer so wishes, operating an input device for sending an affirmative signal to the viewing appliance. The receipt of the affirmative signal causes the viewing appliance to send a response signal to the server which, in turn, sends a second trigger signal to the viewing appliance for causing the viewing appliance to open the visually distinct on-screen area, region, window or stripe on the display screen of the information appliance.